



CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

24-HOUR REPORT

5 MARCH 2021

(U) CALIFORNIA

(U) Fresno – Inmate Charged with Unemployment Fraud

(U) A California prisoner is one of two people accused of stealing more than \$100,000 in unemployment benefits. Alana Powers, 45, an inmate at the Central California Women's Facility in Chowchilla, was indicted by a federal grand jury last week, along with 51-year-old Jason Vertz of Fresno, federal prosecutors said Wednesday. Officials say the state has paid at least \$11 billion in benefits to people whose identities it has been unable to verify, which they say is likely fraud. Of that, \$810 million was tied to ineligible prisoners.

SOURCE: 3 March 2021, [Associated Press](#)

(U) Los Angeles – 1,500-Pounds of Methamphetamine Seized in Paramount

(U) The FBI says a joint investigation with the LAPD into organized crime resulted in the seizure of \$112 million worth of methamphetamine. The investigation apparently involved a new cartel out of Jalisco, Mexico "facilitating the movement of fentanyl, cocaine, heroin & meth in LA & elsewhere," the FBI said. More than 1,500-pounds of methamphetamine, worth approximately \$112 million, were seized from the unspecified location. No further information was released about the investigation.

SOURCE: 4 March 2021, [CBS Los Angeles](#)

(U) NATIONAL

(U) Illinois – Man Sentenced for Supporting ISIS

(U) Chicago – Joseph D. Jones, 38, was sentenced to 12-years in federal prison conspiring to provide material support to the terrorist group Islamic State in Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS). Jones, of Zion was convicted in 2019, according to a news release from the US attorney's office. Evidence at the trial showed Jones used social media to advocate for violent extremism. In 2015, Jones unknowingly began meeting with undercover FBI agents in 2015 and discussed his devotion to ISIS, the news release said. In 2017, Jones gave cell phones to one of the agents, thinking the phones would be used to detonate explosives in ISIS attacks overseas. Co-defendant Edward Schimenti, 39, of Zion was also convicted of conspiracy as well as a charge of making false statements to the FBI. Schimenti's sentencing will be on 9 April.

SOURCE: 3 March 2021, [Chicago Daily Herald](#)

(U) Michigan – FBI: Suspects Trained for Governor Whitmer Kidnapping in "Kill House"

(U) Jackson – Three of the 14 suspects charged with plotting to kidnap Governor Gretchen Whitmer were in court Wednesday as some of the case against them was laid out. Paul Bellar, Joseph Morrison, and Pete Musico are all facing state-level charges of providing material support for terrorist acts. Prosecutors said they also participated in multiple training sessions in what are called "kill houses," designed to help them practice entering a building and finding their target. The investigation also revealed there was an attack planned on the Battle Creek Police Department.

SOURCE: 4 March 2021, [Nexstar Media Wire](#)

UNCLASSIFIED

(U) Nebraska – Troopers Arrest Two California Men with 770-Pounds of Marijuana in Van

(U) Seward – Two California men were arrested Wednesday after Nebraska State Patrol troopers found 770-pounds of marijuana in the cargo van they were driving on Interstate 80. The driver, Javier Hernandez-Romano, 29, and passenger Gustavo Perez Heuerta, 21, were taken into custody on suspicion of possession of marijuana with the intent to deliver. State Patrol spokesman Cody Thomas said the cargo van was stopped near Seward on I-80 Wednesday afternoon because it was speeding, and the van's driver failed to signal.

SOURCE: 4 March 2021, [CBS 13 Sacramento](#)

(U) INTERNATIONAL

(U) New Zealand – Police Charge Man After Mosque Threat

(U) Wellington – New Zealand police said yesterday they had charged a 27-year-old man after he threatened to attack two mosques that were the scene of mass murder by a white supremacist two years ago. Police said an online threat was made this week on the 4chan website against the Al Noor mosque and the Linwood Islamic Centre, which were targeted in 2019 in New Zealand's most deadly shooting. Police provided no details on the nature of the threat, but New Zealand media said the threats had included setting off a car bomb on 15 March, the anniversary of the 2019 attack.

SOURCE: 4 March 2021, [Reuters](#)

(U) PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER.

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